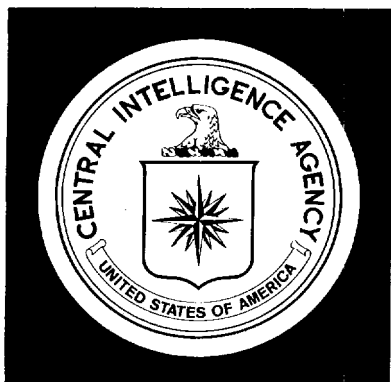


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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A026000010002-0

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OIL: Egyptian interior minister reportedly says oil
boycott against the US will be lifted at the end of
January.

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OIL: EGYPTIAN INTERIOR MINISTER SALIM REPORT-
EDLY HAS TOLD MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN CAIRO THAT THE
OIL BOYCOTT AGAINST THE US WILL BE LIFTED WHEN THE
DISENGAGEMENT OF EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES BEGINS;
THIS WILL OCCUR, HE SAID, AT THE END OF JANUARY.
SALIM PASSED ON THIS INFORMATION IN THE COURSE OF
A BRIEFING FOR MINISTRY DEPARTMENT HEADS ON JANUARY
4, FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM CONSULTATIONS WITH PRES-
IDENT SADAT IN ASWAN

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SALIM APPARENTLY DID NOT ELABORATE, AND THERE
IS NO EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THAT THE OIL-PRODUCING
STATES HAVE DECIDED ON THIS RELAXATION. A FURTHER
SOFTENING OF THE ARAB POSITION ON OIL WOULD, NEVER-
THELESS, SEEM QUITE POSSIBLE. SAUDI ARABIA HAS AL-
READY RELAXED ITS INITIAL POSITION THAT THE BOYCOTT
COULD NOT BE LIFTED UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF A FINAL
PEACE SETTLEMENT, AND IT MAY HAVE BEEN PERSUADED,
POSSIBLY WITH EGYPTIAN PRODDING, THAT PROGRESS ON
DISENGAGEMENT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT CAUSE FOR LIFTING,
OR AT LEAST EASING, THE BOYCOTT.

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